

# STARS AND STRIPES

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

## Republican Guard heading south

BY ELLEN KNICKMEYER  
AND ALEXANDRA ZAVIS

*The Associated Press*

IN SOUTH-CENTRAL IRAQ — A 1,000-vehicle convoy of Iraq's Republican Guard headed south Wednesday toward central Iraq, site of the heaviest fighting of the war. In Baghdad, Iraqi officials said two cruise missiles hit a residential area, killing 14 people.

In the far south, British forces were fighting on the fringes of the beleaguered city of Basra, and the first substantial relief ships reached the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr from Kuwait.

Blinding sandstorms swept across Iraq for a second day, grounding coalition helicopters and significantly reducing the number of flights off carriers in the Gulf and eastern Mediterranean.

The U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry Division was 50 miles from Baghdad, within striking distance, said Col. Michael Linnington of the U.S. 101st Airborne Division's 3rd Brigade, but was held back by the unrelenting sandstorms.

"We are one tank of fuel from Baghdad," the commander said.

"The 101st is grounded and we're not doing what we do best, which is air assault operations and attacks. So we're waiting for a weather break."

In Baghdad, Iraqi officials said a coalition missile attack on a residential area killed 14 people and injured 30 others at midday Wednesday.

Associated Press Television News video showed a large crater in the middle of a street and bodies wrapped in plastic sheeting in the back of a pickup truck. Hundreds of people stood in front of a damaged building shaking their fists and shouting.

Later Wednesday, more huge blasts shook the city, Al-Jazeera television reported.

Hoping to cripple the Iraqi government's communications, coalition troops attacked the state-run television headquarters in Baghdad before dawn Wednesday, knocking the station's international satellite signal off the air for a few hours.

Iraq's information minister, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf, accused the U.S.-British coalition of striking civilian areas in several cities, notably An Nasiriyah, where he said more than 500 people were injured and 200 homes destroyed.

Intelligence officers with the U.S. military's 1st Marine Expeditionary Force said 3,000 Republican Guard troops were headed from Baghdad southeast to Al Kut on Highway 7, a route that avoids U.S. Army forces but leads directly to Marines who have been fighting around An Nasiriyah. Another 2,000 Iraqi troops were spotted south of Al Kut.

An Iraqi military spokesman said a Republican Guard special forces unit attacked coalition troops in south-central Iraq, destroying six armored vehicles and inflicting an unspecified number of casualties.

At a refueling station for helicopters in southern Iraq, helicopters brought in the wounded — three U.S. Marines, six Iraqi prisoners and five Iraqi civilians. Most other aircraft were grounded by the sandstorms.

Around Basra, British forces poised to seize the key southern city were fighting on its perimeter against more than 1,000 Iraqi militiamen. The militiamen reportedly also faced some sort of insurrection Tuesday by Shiite Muslim civilians opposed to Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

"Truthfully, the reports are confused, but we believe there was some limited form of uprising," British Prime Minister Tony Blair told Parliament on Wednesday. "Once people know that Saddam's grip on power is being weakened, then there is no doubt at all that they wish to opt for freedom rather than repression."

Iraqi officials have denied there was any uprising Tuesday in Basra.

Al-Jazeera television showed video of two men it identified as being British prisoners being held in Az Zubayr, a Basra suburb, although they were not dressed in military uniforms. Two bloodied bodies of dead soldiers in uniform also were shown, but were not identified.

Basra's trapped civilian population of 1.3 million is believed to be fast running out of food and in danger of outbreaks of disease from contaminated water.

In the southern port of Umm Qasr, the first sizable relief convoy arrived in Iraq during a sandstorm Wednesday after being stalled for days because of fighting across southern Iraq. Seven tractor-trailers arrived carrying food and water donated by Kuwaitis as allied forces struggled to clear the way for more aid shipments.

"Umm Qasr is now secure — as a port and as a town," said Brig. Jim Dutton of the Royal Marines.

But Iraq's information minister, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf, contended that the allies did not have full control of Umm Qasr.

At the U.S. Central Command in Qatar, Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks accused the Iraqi government of using its own civilians as human shields for some of its military units fighting against U.S. and British troops.

In London, Amnesty International said both sides may have committed war crimes, including coalition missile attacks on Iraqi TV.

The human rights group accused Iraqi forces of deliberately shelling civilians in Basra and placing military objectives close to civilians.

## Helping the wounded



JOHN MAKELY/AP

**U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. Marcco Ware carries an injured Iraqi soldier who was shot three times during an attempted ambush of the 3rd Battalion, Fifth Regiment convoy Tuesday morning in central Iraq. One Marine was killed, and one was injured during the attack, which resulted in about 40 dead Iraqi soldiers and 30 POWs.**

## U.S. denies targeting Baghdad residences

*The Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — U.S. military officials on Wednesday denied targeting a residential section of Baghdad where cruise missiles struck near a market, killing 14 people. But they said the incident illustrates how little Saddam Hussein's regime cares about the lives of civilians.

During a briefing at the Pentagon, Maj. Gen. Stanley McChrystal said U.S. forces did not specifically aim at the northern Baghdad community of Al-Shaab, "nor were any bombs and missiles fired" there. But he could not say whether the missiles that did land there were Iraqi weapons, or U.S. missiles that missed their targets.

"We do know for a fact that something landed in the Shaab district," McChrystal said. "But we do not know if it was U.S. or Iraqi. We do know that we did not target anything in the vicinity of the [Al-Shaab] district."

Without offering details, Pentagon spokeswoman Torie Clarke said the

fact that Iraq placed missile launchers only 300 feet from residents' homes is "a sign of the brutality of this regime and how little they care about civilians."

Clarke said that U.S. war strategists had gone to great lengths to craft precision strikes on military targets in order to keep casualties low. "Any casualty that occurs, any death that occurs, is a direct result of Saddam Hussein's policies," she said.

McChrystal said since the start of the war, the United States had launched more than 600 Tomahawk missiles and 4,300 precision-guided weapons. More than 250,000 U.S. troops and 40,000 troops from other countries are deployed, he said.

The soldiers are making their way toward Baghdad, clearing out pockets of resistance along the way — including from the Fedayeen Saddam, a militia that has been rallying other Iraqi forces to fight and in some case reportedly keeping them from surrendering.

**See FEDAYEEN on Page 4**

## Latest developments

■ A large contingent of Iraq's elite Republican Guard headed south in a 1,000-vehicle convoy Wednesday toward U.S. Marines in central Iraq — an area that already has seen the heaviest fighting of the war. In Baghdad, Iraqi officials said two cruise missiles hit a residential area, killing 14 people.

■ British forces battled more than 1,000 die-hard Iraqi loyalists for control of Basra on Wednesday, coming to the defense of inhabitants who rose up against Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein in the streets of the country's second-largest city.

■ The U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry Division drew to within 50 miles of Baghdad, west of where the Republican Guard was advancing. Other American forces were expected to join soon in squeezing the capital from several directions.

■ The first sizable relief convoy rolled into Iraq in a sandstorm Wednesday. Seven large, battered tractor-trailers entered Umm Qasr on Wednesday carrying food and water donated by Kuwaitis.

■ A U.S. general said Wednesday the discovery of 3,000 chemical suits in a hospital in central Iraq that had been used as an Iraqi base raised concern that Saddam Hussein's regime was prepared to use chemical weapons.

■ A military source said the U.S. Central Command in Qatar now had evidence that the Iraqi regime had wired many of the bridges around Baghdad for destruction.

■ Turkey's military chief of staff pledged Wednesday to coordinate with the United States before sending troops into northern Iraq and said there would be no deployment unless a refugee crisis erupted or Turkey's security was threatened.

■ En route to Baghdad, units from the 7th Cavalry Regiment fought a fierce running battle with Iraqi forces near the central city of Najaf. According to preliminary reports from American military officials, U.S. troops killed up to 500 Iraqi fighters, suffering the loss of two tanks but no casualties.

■ Using missiles and warplanes, allied forces struck Iraqi state-run television early Wednesday. The station's international satellite signal was knocked off the air, but regular broadcast resumed on schedule after daybreak.

■ A second American serviceman died from wounds suffered in a grenade attack in Kuwait blamed on a U.S. Army sergeant, the military said.

■ U.S. officials reported signs of renewed control by Baghdad of military and security forces around Iraq, but said they don't know whether that leadership is provided by Saddam Hussein or by his senior chiefs.

■ Thousands of protesters in Sydney, Australia, pelted police with bottles and chairs grabbed from street-side cafes Wednesday in Australia's most violent demonstration yet against the Iraq war. In South Korea, demonstrators were arrested when they tried to barge into the U.S. Embassy.

From The Associated Press

## Philippine rebel killed

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines — Philippine troops killed a senior commander of the Muslim extremist Abu Sayyaf group in a raid on his hideout, the military said Wednesday.

Salip Asman Halipa, who allegedly was involved in a series of kidnappings and murders in southern Basilan province, was killed late Tuesday on the islet of Malamawi, off Basilan, said Lt. Gen. Narciso Abaya, chief of the military's Southern Command.

The raid followed a tip from fishermen that Abu Sayyaf guerrillas were in the area.

Abaya said there were no government casualties and troops were pursuing guerrillas who escaped.

Halipa had an \$18,350 bounty on his head. His body was turned over to police.

From The Associated Press

## Military

### Car fires near U.S. bases in Italy:

Three cars belonging to American personnel from U.S. military bases in northeastern Italian cities were set ablaze in separate arson attacks, authorities said Wednesday.

Nobody was injured by the fires, which involved two vehicles near the base in Vicenza and one in a residential area near Aviano Air Base, Italian officials said. One car was destroyed, while the other two were damaged.

Opinion polls have found Italians widely against the war, and anti-war rallies in the weeks before and in the days since the war began have drawn thousands of participants across the nation.

## War on terrorism

**Pakistani released:** A Pakistani man accused of sheltering al-Qaida's No. 3 leader, Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, was released from prison Wednesday after paying bail.

Ahmed Abdul Qadus has been in custody since March 1, when Pakistani security officials, working closely with FBI agents, raided his home in Rawalpindi, near the capital Islamabad.

**Suspect pleads guilty:** One of the alleged leaders of a suspected al-Qaida-trained terror cell has pleaded guilty to supporting Osama bin Laden's terrorist group.

Yahya Goba, 26, pleaded guilty Tuesday in U.S. District Court becoming the third defendant to reach a deal with prosecutors in a case that sent shock waves through the Buffalo, N.Y., suburb of Lackawanna.

Goba is one of six men charged with providing support to bin Laden's group.

**'Dirty bomb' suspect:** The government insisted in court papers released Tuesday that Jose Padilla, accused of plotting with al-Qaida to detonate a radioactive "dirty bomb," should not be allowed to meet with defense lawyers. U.S. District Judge Michael Mukasey ruled earlier this month that Padilla would be allowed to consult with lawyers.

But federal prosecutors, in a letter to Mukasey, said they planned to appeal his decision — and repeated their position that Padilla "poses a danger to the national security of the United States."

**Al-Qaida suspects in Kenya:** Kenya will hand over a suspected senior member of the al-Qaida terrorist network to U.S. authorities, the foreign minister said Tuesday.

Kalonzo Musyoka told parliament that the suspect was detained in neighboring Somalia last week. He did not say when the suspect would be handed over.

On March 18, Somali gunmen entered a hospital in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, and seized the man Kenyans have identified as a ranking al-Qaida suspect.

**Homeland security spending:** The federal government is not supplying enough money to New York state for homeland security purposes, Republican Gov. George Pataki said Tuesday.

After a visit to an Air National Guard facility near Schenectady, where he talked to troops and their families, Pataki said he had made his concerns known to Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge.

A spokesman for Ridge said the secretary shared the governor's concerns and would work with Congress to address them.

## Nation

**No Elian lawsuit allowed:** Miami relatives of young Cuban refugee Elian Gonzalez cannot sue former Attorney General Janet Reno and other federal officials for allegedly using excessive force when agents seized the boy from

# News tracker: What's new with old news

the family's home, an appellate court has ruled.

Reno and other federal officials have immunity for their official actions unless it can be shown that they knew the agents would violate the Gonzalez family's rights, the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said in a ruling made public Wednesday. The family failed to meet that standard, the Atlanta-based court said, reversing a lower court ruling.

Armed federal agents removed Elian, then 6, from the family's home on April 22, 2000, five months after he was rescued from the Atlantic Ocean.

**Tractor protest:** The North Carolina tobacco farmer whose two-day tractor protest led to gridlock in the nation's capital caused another commotion Tuesday, this time in a federal courtroom.

Dwight Ware Watson, 50, shouted at a federal judge during a detention hearing.

U.S. Magistrate Judge John M. Facciola ordered Watson removed from the courtroom and quickly left himself after pressing a panic button to summon U.S. marshals into the courtroom.

Facciola found probable cause for charges of making a false threat to use explosives and ordered Watson held pending trial.

**Bush delays documents release:** Millions of government documents will remain sealed under a new executive order that delays their automatic declassification for more than three years and makes it easier to reclassify some papers that might damage national security.

Amending a less restrictive order signed by President Clinton, President Bush's action Tuesday gives agencies until the end of 2006 to release the documents.

## World

**Hunger strike ends in death:** A Turkish prisoner died Wednesday from a hunger strike, raising the death toll in the 2½ year protest against Turkey's maximum security prisons to 65 people.

Yusuf Arici, 32, died in an Ankara hospital after fasting since May 1, 2002, said Sevgi Bolucuk, an official at the Ankara-based Human Rights Association. Arici was serving time at an Ankara prison for membership in the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front, a banned Marxist group.

The prisoners are protesting the government's policy of moving prisoners from large wards to one- or three-inmate cells.

**Fujimori on most wanted list:** Interpol put disgraced former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori on its most wanted list Wednesday, issuing a "red notice" calling for the exiled leader's arrest and extradition for murder and kidnapping charges in Peru.

The move by the international police agency puts further pressure on Japan, where Fujimori fled to escape a corruption scandal in 2000 and is protected from extradition by Japanese citizenship.

Fujimori, who as president closed down Congress and gave the army sweeping powers in a successful campaign against Maoist guerrillas, faces murder charges for allegedly authorizing death squads who massacred suspected rebel sympathizers in the 1990s.

**November 17 trial:** One of 19 suspected members of Greece's deadliest terrorist group, November 17, testified Wednesday that he took part in its 1986 killing of a Greek industrialist and in its 1987 attack on a busload of American soldiers.

Patroklos Tselentis, 42, told the court he was driving a getaway motorcycle in the slaying of industrialist Dimitris Angelopoulos and a truck in the bus bombing which injured 11 U.S. soldiers.

It was the first time since the trial began four weeks ago that any of the

suspects has acknowledged a role in the 23 killings and more than 100 bombings carried out by November 17 since 1975.

**North Korea breaks ties:** Accusing the United States of planning an invasion, North Korea on Wednesday cut off the only regular military contact with the U.S.-led command that monitors the Korean War armistice.

The move will further isolate the communist North amid tensions over its suspected nuclear weapons programs.

North Korea claimed again Tuesday the United States may attack the communist state after the war in Iraq and spark a "second Iraqi crisis." It pledged to beef up its defenses.

The U.N. Command, which has monitored the armistice since the end of the 1950-53 war, had no immediate comment. Without a peace treaty, the Korean peninsula is still technically at a state of war.

**SARS deaths in China:** Chinese authorities sharply increased the death toll from a respiratory illness, as World Health Organization investigators made the first public link Wednesday between cases in southern China and a global outbreak blamed for at least 53 deaths.

The link by WHO doctors, coupled with the Chinese disclosure, nearly triples the number of people dead from the outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome, or SARS.

"This is the same disease," said Dr. Meirion Evans, a member of the WHO team in Beijing this week to study the illness that has sickened at least 1,300, prompted quarantines in two countries and generated worldwide anxiety.

SARS has killed patients in China, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Canada and Singapore.

After weeks of silence, Chinese authorities said Wednesday that 31 people had died of pneumonia in the southern province of Guangdong, a coastal area that abuts Hong Kong, where 10 have died.

Hours later in Beijing, 1,200 miles north, officials announced eight cases of their own, three fatal. The country's largest city, Shanghai, announced it had no cases.

The release of information — a flood of data by Chinese standards — came after China fell under international criticism and repeated requests by WHO to be more forthcoming in its cooperation and more diligent in its tracking of cases.

## Business

**Halliburton contract:** A unit of Houston-based oilfield services giant Halliburton Co. will organize the oil well fire-fighting and rehabilitation effort in Iraq just as it did after the 1991 Persian Gulf War, officials said.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on Monday gave Kellogg Brown & Root the go-ahead to implement the Defense Department's plan to extinguish oil well fires in Iraq and repair the damage.

Halliburton subcontractors Boots & Coots International Well Control Inc. and Wild Well Control Inc., both also from Houston, will handle the firefighting chores.

**Forced sex case rejected:** Japan's top court Tuesday rejected an appeal from a group of South Korean women seeking compensation for having been forced to provide sex to Japanese soldiers during World War II.

The decision is a setback for other groups of women suing Tokyo for being forced into sexual servitude during the war.

In the ruling, the supreme court upheld a 2001 appeals court decision overturning a lower court order for the government to compensate the women, court spokesman Mitsuhiro Miyamoto said.

From The Associated Press

# Updates from around the war

## Bombing runs placed on hold

ABOARD THE USS KITTY HAWK — A sandstorm over the Persian Gulf interrupted bombing missions Wednesday from at least one U.S. aircraft carrier and grounded coalition helicopters in southern Iraq.

Navy officials said only two F/A-18 Hornet fighters aboard the USS Kitty Hawk were able to launch before a swirling cloud of dust blowing in from the northwest enveloped the ship just after midday. Visibility was reduced to less than 100 yards.

Launches were put on hold until later Wednesday, when the flight plan would be reviewed. At least two sorties were canceled outright.

Capt. Thomas A. Parker, the Kitty Hawk's commander, said any further launches from the ship Wednesday would be "selective."

The two Hornets that took off before the storm hit flew their mission but diverted on their return to an air base in Kuwait rather than risk a dangerous landing on the Kitty Hawk, spokesman Lt. Brook DeWalt said.

## 2nd person dies from attack

BOISE, Idaho — A second U.S. serviceman has died from wounds he suffered in a grenade attack on soldiers in Kuwait, an attack an Army sergeant is suspected of carrying out.

Air Force Maj. Gregory Stone, 40, based in Boise, was pronounced dead early Tuesday at an Army field hospital in Kuwait, the Idaho Air National Guard said. Army Capt. Christopher Scott Seifert, 27, of Easton, Pa., also was killed in Saturday's attack, and 14 other soldiers were injured.

The suspect, Sgt. Asan Akbar, is in custody. He was shipped to a military jail in Germany on Tuesday after a judge found probable cause to try him for the assault. The probable cause ruling keeps Akbar confined as military investigators continue to investigate.

Lt. Col. Tim Marsano, spokesman for the Idaho Air National Guard, said Stone, a 20-year active and reserve veteran of the Air Force, was the Air Liaison Officer with the Army's 101st Airborne Division at Camp Pennsylvania.

Stone had two sons, ages 11 and 7, who live in Boise.

The Army said Akbar, an American Muslim, was taken from Camp Doha, Kuwait, to the Mannheim Confinement Facility, where he will await a pretrial investigation. It was not clear where that would take place.

## More wounded arrive in Germany

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Six more troops wounded in Operation Iraqi Freedom arrived for medical treatment in Germany on Tuesday, a hospital press release said.

Two soldiers and four Marines arrived at Ramstein Air Base at 8 p.m. and were taken by ambulance to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center.

One Marine was admitted to the intensive care unit with serious injuries. All other patients were in stable condition and receiving treatment in the medical surgical ward, the release said.

A total of 21 servicemembers with combat-related injuries have been admitted to the Army hospital since Sunday. Of those, five are members of the 101st Airborne (Air Assault) Division injured when a fellow soldier threw a grenade into tents at Camp Pennsylvania, Kuwait, division spokesman John Minton said.

Two of those 101st Airborne soldiers were in intensive care but moved Wednesday to the medical surgical ward where they are in stable condition.

## 1st relief convoy rolls into Iraq

UMM QASR, Iraq — The first sizable relief convoy rolled into Iraq in a sandstorm Wednesday as allied forces struggled to clear the way for more aid shipments, using dolphins to remove mines from waterways and trying to subdue Iraqi fighters in the city of Basra.

Three days after President Bush promised "massive amounts" of humanitarian aid, seven large, battered tractor-trailers entered Umm Qasr carrying food and water donated by Kuwaitis. The convoy was escorted by U.S. soldiers.

"We planned for 30 trucks but we only got seven loaded because of the severe sandstorm," said E.J. Russell of the Humanitarian Operations Center, a joint U.S.-Kuwaiti agency. The storm cut visibility to about 100 yards.

Hundreds of cases of water were stacked on three of the semis.

The rest carried boxes of tuna, crackers, sweets and other food.

As the trucks lumbered past blasted buildings on the Iraq-Kuwait border, an Iraqi boy pointed to his mouth and shouted "Eat, eat!"

"Umm Qasr is now secure — as a port and as a town," said Brig. Jim Dutton of the Royal Marines. The town's deepwater port is needed for any relief effort.

## British fire on Iraqi forces

NEAR BASRA, Iraq — British forces engaged a column of Iraqi armored vehicles — tanks and armored personnel carriers — that filed out of the southern city of Basra late Wednesday, a British military source said.

The source said coalition aircraft as well as ground units were hitting the column, which he estimated at about 120 vehicles. The vehicles were moving south along Highway 6.

Basra had been largely quiet for much of the day, with British forces trading occasional fire with some of the estimated 1,000 die-hard Iraqi loyalists fighting for control of the country's second-largest city.

The British said they were coming to the defense of inhabitants who rose up in the streets against Saddam Hussein's regime.

Britain's 7th Armored Brigade — the famed Desert Rats — was said to be awaiting orders to enter the heart of the city.

On Tuesday, inhabitants of the mostly Shiite Muslim city started attacking members of Saddam's Baath Party and other Iraqi fighters, who responded by firing mortars at their own people, the British military said. The British, in turn, shelled the mortar positions and bombed Baath headquarters.

## Blix criticizes inspector recall

VIENNA, Austria — Hans Blix, the U.N. chief weapons inspector, has voiced criticism and disappointment that his inspectors had to pull out from Iraq before completing their task.

In an interview with the Austrian magazine News at U.N. headquarters in New York, Blix said, "I am disappointed that we could not stay longer to finish our work."

"We had the door slammed in our faces," said Blix, the head of the U.N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, known as UNMOVIC. "Three and a half months were not enough, nor do I believe that U.N. resolution 1441 meant it that way."

Blix described as problematic his cooperation with the U.S. government.

According to the excerpts, Blix said Washington tried to obtain results to its liking, adding "whenever we could not do that, there was criticism."

## Bush speaks at MacDill AFB

MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. — President Bush said Wednesday the war in Iraq is far from over and warned that coalition forces will face "the most desperate elements of a doomed regime" as they near Baghdad.

Trying to rally troops and an anxious American public amid stiffening Iraqi resistance, Bush said, "We will stay on the path, mile by mile, all the way to Baghdad and all the way to victory."

Bush spoke to hundreds of uniformed military personnel as rising U.S. and British casualties raised questions about American battle plans.

Nine Marines were killed Sunday in an ambush, and Army helicopters encountered fierce resistance during an attack Monday on Republican Guard units protecting the approaches to Baghdad. One helicopter went down and its two-man crew was captured.

The first bodies of American servicemen killed in battle were brought back to the United States on Tuesday.

"We pray that God will bless and receive each of the fallen, and we thank God that liberty found such brave defenders," the president said.

Their sacrifice was not in vain, Bush said, asserting that Iraq's weapons of mass destruction could have gotten in the hands of terrorists.

"We will not wait to meet this danger with firefighters and doctors and police on the streets of our own cities," he said. "Instead, we are meeting this danger today with our Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and Marines."

He listed achievements of the small military coalition that consists mostly of British and U.S. forces. Air fields have been seized, terrorists camps destroyed and Saddam Hussein's highly trained Republican Guard troops are under "direct and intense attack," the president said.

"Day by day, Saddam Hussein is losing his grip on Iraq. Day by day, the Iraqi people are closer to freedom," he said.

"The military is making good progress in Iraq, yet this war is far from over," Bush said. "As they approach Baghdad, our fighting units are facing the most desperate elements of a doomed regime. We cannot know the duration of this war, but we are prepared for the battle ahead."

Bush spoke before receiving a classified military briefing at the headquarters of the Central Command, whose top general, Tommy Franks, is running the war against Iraq from a forward headquarters in Qatar.

He also had lunch with troops. His breakfast came with a diplomatic dig at French resistance to war: The menu aboard Air Force One listed "stuffed Freedom Toast," instead of French toast.

"I can assure you there will be a day of reckoning for Iraq, and that day is drawing near," Bush said to loud applause. "We've seen their daring against ruthless enemies and their decency to an oppressed people. Millions of Americans are proud of our military, and so am I."

His voice cracking with emotion, Bush added, "I'm honored to be the commander in chief."

## Firefighter says oil wells sabotaged

KUWAIT CITY — Firefighters trying to put out blazes in southern Iraq's oil fields say that while some wells appear to have been sabotaged, Iraqi troops may have disobeyed orders to blow up many others.

Kuwait's senior firefighter, Aisa Bouyabes, said Monday that his team inspected damaged well heads at several blast sites just across Kuwait's border with Iraq and discovered a pair of black wires snaking away from each one.

"These are the same wires that were used in Kuwait to blow up our wells — the same method exactly. I've seen it before. I inspected the wells in Kuwait immediately after the liberation," Bouyabes said.

Saddam Hussein's troops sabotaged more than 700 well heads in Kuwait's oil fields as they retreated in the closing days of the 1991 Persian Gulf War. The damage took more than two years and \$50 billion to repair.

U.S.-led forces have made a priority in the current war of trying to secure Iraq's oil fields to prevent a repeat of that scorched-earth tactic. One question is why so few of Iraq's 1,685 oil wells are burning, despite ample evidence that Iraqis took time to rig them for detonation.

Although it is far too early to be certain, initial evidence suggests that in the vast majority of cases, Iraqi troops might have disobeyed orders to blow up the wells, or set explosives that were too weak to do serious damage.

It took Kuwaiti firefighters only 15 minutes and two water cannons Monday to snuff out the first fire quenched so far at a booby-trapped Iraqi oil well.

## Powell urges France to ally

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Colin Powell urged France on Tuesday to recognize that the government in Iraq is finished and to join the United States in planning for a better life for the Iraqi people.

Powell, in an interview telecast to France, said it was time to put aside the debate on using force to disarm Iraq. "I regret that we have not been able to see eye-to-eye on this issue with France, and we will move forward from here," he said.

But Powell still appeared nettled by France's attempt to block the war.

Questioned about France's prewar offer to support the U.S.-led coalition if Iraq used chemical weapons, Powell said, "The fact is, if France wanted to help us, our troops are in just as much danger from high explosive rounds than they are from chemical rounds."

"So I'm not sure what the particular distinction is," he said dismissively on France 3 television.

On postwar Iraq, French President Jacques Chirac also has thrown up roadblocks, threatening to veto in the United Nations any attempt to "legitimize the military intervention" and "give the belligerents the power to administer Iraq."

Powell made clear Chirac's objections would not deter the U.S. drive, which British Prime Minister Tony Blair is due to take up with President Bush in their talks here and at Camp David beginning Wednesday.

Still, Powell said, France is a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council so anything done through the council on administering Iraq would require France's support.

"Hopefully, France will play a helpful role," he said.

From wire and staff reports

## Marines find weapons in Iraqi hospital; U.S. condemns facility use

BY LISA BURGESS

*Stars and Stripes*

ARLINGTON, Va. — U.S. Marines on Tuesday captured a hospital in An Nasiriyah, Iraq, that Iraqi paramilitary troops were using as a staging area, according to U.S. Central Command officials.

Marines from Task Force Tarawa had been fired on from the hospital on Monday, a CENTCOM release on the capture said. The building was clearly marked as a hospital by a flag with a red crescent, which is used by the Society of the Red Crescent (the Muslim equivalent of the International Red Cross) as its symbol.

The task force, which includes the 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines, captured about 170 Iraqi soldiers "who were not armed and wearing a mixture of mostly civilian clothing, with parts of military uniforms," the release said.

The Marines used loudspeakers to direct staff and patients to evacuate the hospital before storming the facility, and no civilians were in the hospital when it was seized, CENTCOM officials said.

Marines found inside the hospital "further evidence" that the Iraqi regime possesses weapons of mass destruction and its intent to use them, Army Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks, CENTCOM's deputy director of operations, said Wednesday during a press conference from the forward command's headquarters at Camp as Sayliyah, Qatar.

Inside the hospital, the Marines found and confiscated more than 200 weapons, stockpiles of ammunition, more than 3,000 chemical protection suits and masks, and Iraqi military uniforms. The Marines also found a T-55 tank on the compound.

"What we found [Tuesday] night inside that hospital reinforces our concern" and assertion of the regime's possession of the weapons, Brooks said.

Col. Ron Johnson, TF Tarawa's operations officer, told CENTCOM officials that the Iraqi soldiers were probably being bused into An Nasiriyah in civilian clothes, then going to the hospital to draw both weapons and uniforms before fighting coalition forces in the city.

Marked hospital facilities are protected against military strikes by the Geneva Conventions. In the past two days senior U.S. defense officials have repeatedly condemned the Iraqi military's use of such protected symbols to conduct a guerrilla warfare campaign.

The 170 soldiers captured at the hospital bring the task force's enemy prisoner of war captures to about 500 since the war began last week, the release said.

Staff reporter Sandra Jontz contributed to this report.  
E-mail Lisa Burgess at: [burgessl@stripes.osd.mil](mailto:burgessl@stripes.osd.mil)

# Iraq: Cruise missiles kill 14

BY HAMZA HENDAWI

*The Associated Press*

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Two cruise missiles struck a residential area in Baghdad on Wednesday, killing 14 people, Iraqi defense officials said — the worst single reported instance of civilian deaths since the U.S. bombing campaign began a week ago.

Thirty others were reported injured in the attack, which occurred around midday in the heavily populated northern Baghdad neighborhood of Al-Shaab.

The area consists of homes and about 30 shops, mostly inexpensive restaurants and auto repair shops.

U.S. military officials on Wednesday denied targeting the residential section of Baghdad. But they said the incident illustrates how little Saddam Hussein's regime cares about the lives of civilians.

During a briefing at the Pentagon, Maj. Gen. Stanley McChrystal said U.S. forces did not specifically aim at the northern Baghdad community of Al-Shaab, "nor were any bombs and missiles fired" there.

But he could not say whether the missiles that did land there were Iraqi weapons, or U.S. missiles that missed their targets.

Without offering details, Pentagon spokeswoman Torie Clarke said the fact that Iraq placed missile launchers only 300 feet from residents' homes is "a sign of the brutality of this regime and how little they care about civilians."

At a military briefing in Qatar, U.S. Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks said he could not confirm that U.S. missiles hit the neighborhood.

"We don't have a report that corroborates that so I can't confirm it," he said. "We don't know that those are ours."

Associated Press Television News video showed a large crater in the street, a smoldering building, demolished cars, and bodies wrapped in plastic sheeting in the back of a pickup truck.

The streets were flooded after water pipes ruptured. Street lights toppled over, trees were uprooted and some cars were overturned. At least half the damaged cars were completely gutted by fire, with only charred metal skeletons left.

Other cars had their wheels blown off by the force of the explosion, while flying shrapnel damaged some nearby apartments.

Flames could be seen rising above the burning shops, mixing with the smoke from fires lit around the city to try to obscure the targets of fighter jets.

Men with buckets doused the wreckage of burning automobiles, while women in black chadors grabbed the hands of children and ran from the scene.

Hundreds of people milled around on the street in front of the gutted market. Some of them shook their fists in anger.

"This is barbarian!" shouted Adnan Saleh Barseem. "It's proof that their aggression is collapsing."

Crowds consisting of residents of some of the damaged apartments began to chant: "Oh, Saddam, we sacrifice our souls and blood to you." Some hung out their windows, flashing a V for victory sign in support.

Lt. Col. Hamad Abdullah, head of civil defense in the area, said 14 people were killed and 30 injured. Seventeen cars were destroyed, he added.

U.S. Central Command said it was checking into the report. A spokesman noted that coalition forces take "extraordinary" measures to protect civilians.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, reacting to reports of the civilian deaths in Baghdad, said he was "getting increasingly concerned by humanitarian casualties in this conflict."

"I would want to remind all belligerents that they should respect international humanitarian law and take all necessary steps to protect civilians," Annan told reporters at U.N. headquarters.

On Monday, Iraq's information minister reported that 194 civilians had been injured so far in the bombing of Baghdad.

## Fedayeen

Continued from Page 1

The unexpected level of resistance and battering sandstorms are slowing troops headed to Baghdad, where Saddam and his regime are expected to make their last stand, said officials at the Pentagon and the U.S. military command center in Qatar.

Storms grounded scores of coalition aircraft Tuesday, blinded the array of electronic eyes needed to target Iraq and were gumming up guns, breaking down engines and generally slowing a military campaign designed for speed.

The Fedayeen — which means "those ready to sacrifice themselves for Saddam" — are accused of organizing such battlefield ruses as posing as civilians and faking surrenders in order to ambush invading forces.

Intelligence officials say there could be 30,000 to 60,000 of them, with chapters assigned to each Iraqi province to assure loyalty to Saddam. Other militia groups, including from Saddam's Baath Party, also are operating, and some have been captured, officials said.

Rather than racing toward Baghdad as they have in the last few days, Marines on Wednesday slowed their advance.

One Defense Department official said commanders were surprised by the capability of the Fedayeen. Another official said the group has shown tenacity and that it was expected that it would present the biggest problem in Baghdad rather than in the south.

"We're going into a hunting mode right now," said Lt. Col. B.T. McCoy, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines. "We're going to start hunting down instead of letting them take the cheap shots."

Meanwhile, the Air Force used an experimental bomb to try to knock out Iraq's state-run television. Officials declined to describe the weapon, though they have said in recent months that they were developing a bomb that would emit an electromagnetic pulse to disrupt computers, communications and other equipment.

Also in the package of strikes were Tomahawk cruise missiles and other precision-guided bombs. Television broadcast were back on the air about eight hours later.

Officials expressed caution about a report that some of the soldiers from a maintenance unit captured over the weekend were executed as they attempted to surrender.

Officials said they had one report and that they were looking into it. Five from the unit were shown on Iraqi television as prisoners of war.

Defense officials also revised to 350 the number of Iraqi forces killed in fierce fighting Tuesday for a key Euphrates River crossing about 90 miles south of Baghdad. The number had been widely estimated Tuesday at more than 150 Iraqi fighters and possibly as many as 500. No American casualties were reported from the battle, which pitted an American armored division against Iraqi infantry.

The prospect of a chemical attack loomed Wednesday. Marines in southern Iraq Tuesday found more evidence that Iraq was planning an attack with chemical weapons: caches of gas masks, protective gear and nerve agent antidotes in a hospital U.S. officials said Iraqi soldiers used as an illegal staging area.

Officials have said that the closer troops draw to Baghdad, the more likely the possibility a cornered regime will strike out with weapons of mass destruction. Saddam has said he has none and President Bush has said his refusal to disarm is the reason for the war.

## Suspected attack by Taliban in Afghanistan

*The Associated Press*

KABUL, Afghanistan — Suspected Taliban fighters attacked a government checkpoint in northwestern Afghanistan, starting fighting that left at least 13 combatants dead, a military commander said Wednesday.

About 400 gunmen attacked the checkpoint Tuesday in Tora Shaikh in the northwestern province of Badghis near the border with Turkmenistan, said Mohammad Karim Khadem, a brigade commander in the area.

Seven attackers and six government soldiers were killed in fighting on Tuesday and Wednesday, Khadem said.

There was no independent confirmation of the claim.

A commander in neighboring Herat province, Ammanullah Khan, gave a different version of events and suggested the fighting was ethnically motivated.

Ammanullah Khan, a Pashtun, said forces loyal to Tajik warlord Ismail Khan, who also is governor of Herat province, began attacking the Pashtun village of Atashan in Badghis province on Tuesday.

He said Ismail Khan's forces captured Atashan and burned scores of houses before advancing toward nearby Mangan on Wednesday, where he said fighting was continuing.

Khadem said he was unaware of any fighting in Atashan or Mangan.

Fighting has rarely been reported in Badghis province.

Ammanullah Khan said the area was inhabited mostly by Pashtuns.

Forces loyal to Ismail Khan have clashed repeatedly with those of Ammanullah Khan since the former Taliban regime was ousted in a U.S.-led war in 2001. The Taliban drew much of its ranks from ethnic Pashtuns.

The central government of President Hamid Karzai has struggled to keep a lid on such disputes, but it has little influence outside the capital, Kabul.

# Camp Lejeune mourns deaths

BY ESTES THOMPSON

*The Associated Press*

JACKSONVILLE, N.C. — Judy Pitchford knows all too well the anguish felt by the wives of Marines at Camp Lejeune. During the last war in Iraq, she too was glued to the TV hoping to catch a glimpse of her deployed husband.

Recently, Pitchford has felt the level of despair among relatives of troops abroad swell as they learned that at least 11 Marines from Camp Lejeune have died in Iraq.

"The anxiety is high," said Pitchford, a retired gunnery sergeant and now executive director of the Jacksonville USO. When spouses come to her office to chat or e-mail, she gives them advice gleaned from the last Gulf War: Turn off the TV.

"We encourage them not to sit in front of the TV. They need to get out."

Camp Lejeune is home to nearly 150,000 active duty, dependent, retiree and civilian employees. Streets and housing areas on the base are named for battles that have shed Marine blood.

The polished stone Beirut Memorial at the edge of the base honors 241 soldiers and sailors — the vast majority of them Marines — killed during a 1983 barracks bombing in Lebanon. The latest Iraq deaths are the most casualties suffered by local Marines in one day since Beirut.

Along streets in town, businesses display signs that say "God Bless our Troops" and "We Support Our Troops." Yellow ribbons flutter from truck mirrors and porch railings. American flags fly at half-mast in the city and on base.

Since the latest conflict began in Iraq, nine Marines from Camp Lejeune have died in combat near the southern Iraq town of An Nasiriyah and two have died in accidents.

Among the dead was Cpl. Jose A. Garibay, 21, of Orange County, Calif. Janis Toman, a resource specialist at the high school he attended in Newport Harbor, Calif., received a letter from him Monday and was putting together a package of cookies and candy when she learned he was dead.

"It felt like a punch in the stomach," she said. "He's one of the kids I feel I

made a difference in his life. He's one of the reasons you want to teach."

In the northern Denver suburb of Thornton, the family of Lance Cpl. Thomas J. Slocum, 22, was in mourning. Slocum's stepfather, Stanley Cooper, said the Marines had turned the young man around.

"He believed the war was necessary, and that's the same way we felt," he said. That belief made news of his stepson's death slightly easier to accept, he said.

The mood was somber Tuesday at the Cedar Key School in Cedar Key, Fla. That is where slain Cpl. Brian Rory Buesing, 20, graduated from high school in 2000 and where his eighth-grade sister still attends.

"He's a hero, he was doing the right thing," said Buesing's stepfather, Roger Steve. "We couldn't be more proud. I just wish it didn't have to happen."

Retired Sgt. Maj. Joe Houle, director of the Marine Corps Museum of the Carolinas in Jacksonville, said the families of the dead Marines should take comfort in the belief that their loved ones died trying to prevent more deaths.

## Korean tensions lose spotlight, but military is watching

BY JENNIFER SVAN  
AND T.D. FLACK

*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The North Korean nuclear crisis seemed to slip from the international media's attention when the first bombs rained down on Baghdad, but the U.S. military still keeps a close eye on the region.

As the United States geared up for the war in Iraq, some analysts and regional experts predicted North Korea might take advantage of the situation with military provocations.

In response, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld moved U.S. long-range bombers to Guam and directed the USS Carl Vinson into the region to cover for the USS Kitty Hawk, which was sent to the Gulf.

After ordering the bombers to Guam, The Associated Press quoted Rumsfeld as saying he wanted to make sure that U.S. forces were properly arrayed "where someone might think of taking advantage of that situation with respect to Iraq."

The 7th Air Expeditionary Wing stood up at Andersen in early March to support the B-1B Lancer and B-52H Stratofortress bombers, which can be refueled in the air and fly thousands of miles to deliver long-range cruise missiles and satellite-guided bombs. Troops from 11 bases were moved to Andersen to work with the 7th AEW.

Air Force 2nd Lt. Thomas Wenz, 7th AEW spokesman, said contributing Pacific bases are: Yokota and Misawa Air bases in Japan; Kadena Air Base, Okinawa; Eielson and Elmendorf Air Force bases, Alaska; and Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. The bombers are from Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, and Barksdale Air Force Base, La.

Randolph Air Force Base, Texas; Tinker Air Force Base, Okla.; and Fairchild Air Force Base, Wash., also have troops on the island.

Col. Jonathan George, 7th AEW commander, characterized the bombers' presence as "stabilizing," not an act of aggression.

Andersen, meanwhile, appears to be spilling over with mostly young airmen who pack the chow hall for meals and have made razors and soap hot commodities at the base exchange.

Since troops began arriving, the exchange has seen about a 27 percent spike in sales, mostly from airmen buying toiletries, such as shaving cream and toothpaste, and greeting cards, batteries for CD players and hangers, store managers said last week.

"We're out of hangars again — 99 cents for a dozen," said operations manager Gerald Williams.

Army and Air Force Exchange Service headquarters in Dallas has instructed AAFES stores to display "essential deployment items" in high traffic areas near checkout aisles. On the list: beef jerky, Arabic language books, playing cards, foot powder, bottle openers and Band-Aids, among other sundries.

Joanne Borja, the BX's acting general manager at Andersen, said store officials have been told in meetings to expect about 2,000 additional troops at Andersen for the next six to eight months.

But Wenz, the 7th AEW spokesman, said "that number is completely inaccurate" and "pure speculation on their part. The length of time is also speculation with regards to any deployed forces here because there's no defined end date."

Wenz said he could not discuss specific deployed troop numbers.

E-mail Jennifer H. Svan at: [svanj@pstripes.osd.mil](mailto:svanj@pstripes.osd.mil); T.D. Flack at: [flack@pstripes.osd.mil](mailto:flack@pstripes.osd.mil)

## Critics: Hypocrisy in U.S. demands for POWs in Iraq

BY IAN JAMES

*The Associated Press*

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Critics are asking how the United States can demand the protection of the Geneva Conventions for soldiers captured in Iraq while not fully complying in its treatment of terror suspects in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The United States is "giving some excuse to the Iraqis" to mistreat prisoners, said Khalid al-Odah, a Kuwaiti whose 25-year-old son has been held in Guantanamo for more than a year without charge or access to a lawyer. "I see that as relatively a double standard," al-Odah said Wednesday from Kuwait.

He isn't alone in suggesting the U.S. government's position of calling Guantanamo detainees "enemy combatants" and not prisoners of war is contradictory and could backfire.

"The administration is looking somewhat hypocritical in the eyes of many people," said Robert K. Goldman, an expert on the laws of war and professor at American University in Washington. "This issue, sooner or later, was going to come back to haunt us."

The military maintains treatment is humane for about 660 men from 42 countries held on suspicion of links to al-Qaida terror network or Afghanistan's former Taliban regime.

"They're detained because they're considered a threat to the United States," said Lt. Col. Barry Johnson, a spokesman at Guantanamo.

Images of U.S. POWs on Iraqi television have drawn criticism. But "the United States is not in a very good moral or legal position to make this complaint," said Michael Ratner, a lawyer for relatives of two Australian and two British prisoners.

It was the U.S. Department of Defense that published the first pictures of detainees arriving at Guantanamo — arousing outrage even among some friendly governments with images of handcuffed men blinded by blacked-out goggles, wearing ear muffs and surgical masks.

Officials first allowed journalists to photograph detainees through chain-link fences but in April moved them to a permanent prison where screens obscure journalists' view. Recognizable photos of faces were never allowed, with the military citing the conventions.

On Sunday, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld noted the Geneva Conventions forbid showing or humiliating POWs and said it was something the United States does not do.

Military officials say photographs of detainees give a distorted view and that they are abiding by most of the Third Geneva Convention of 1949 gov-

erning POW treatment. Officials deny using torture and say detainees are interrogated humanely, allowed to practice their religion and given good medical care.

Prisoners released from Bagram air base in Afghanistan this month said they were beaten, deprived of sleep or made to stay naked on a sheet of ice. U.S. military coroners also have ruled that two prisoners who died at Bagram were beaten.

The International Committee of the Red Cross has urged the military to clarify the detainees' legal status, saying each is a POW unless a tribunal rules otherwise.

U.S. officials respond that detainees aren't "lawful" combatants.

The conventions say POWs should be sent home "after the cessation of active hostilities," but Pentagon spokesman Maj. Ted Wadsworth said when the conflict ends "has yet to be determined."

Al-Odah, who backed U.S. forces during the 1991 Persian Gulf War and believes his son is innocent, said the 12 Kuwaiti prisoners have missed much back home, including the death of another's father, who suffered a heart attack Tuesday.

"The United States government should stick to its principles," he said. "It is a free country, it is a nation of rule of law — and this is not happening now."

## Switching gears: U.S. war focus shifts to Iraqi specialty forces

*The Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Surprised by the power of Iraq's paramilitaries, the Pentagon is adjusting its tactics in the push to Baghdad, U.S. defense officials said Wednesday.

Instead of racing to the capital, parts of the American-led invasion are being forced to focus much more on pockets of resistance and ambushes in the south, including from the Fedayeen Saddam, a militia that has been rallying other Iraqis to fight and in some cases, reportedly keeping them from surrendering.

Still, Pentagon spokeswoman Victoria Clarke said Wednesday the militia activity was not slowing the war, with U.S. Army and Marine forces closer to Baghdad continuing to make progress overnight.

While British forces battled more than 1,000 die-hard Iraqi loyalists for control of the southern city of Basra, the U.S. 7th Cavalry Regiment fought a tough battle near Najaf in central Iraq.

The unexpected level of resistance from militia and battering sandstorms are creating a drag on troops headed to Baghdad, where President Saddam Hussein and his regime are expected to make their last stand, said officials at the Pentagon and the U.S. military command center in Qatar.

Storms grounded scores of coalition aircraft Tuesday, blinded the array of electronic eyes needed to target Iraq and were gumming up guns, breaking down engines and generally slowing a military campaign designed for speed.

The Fedayeen — which means "those ready to sacrifice themselves for Sadd-

am" — are accused of organizing such battlefield ruses as posing as civilians and faking surrenders in order to ambush invading forces.

Intelligence officials say there could be 30,000 to 60,000 Fedayeen, with chapters assigned to each Iraqi province to assure loyalty to Saddam. Other militia groups, including from Saddam's Baath Party, also are operating, and some have been captured, officials said.

One Defense Department official said commanders were surprised by the capability of the Fedayeen, another by its brutality in forcing regular Iraqi army troops to fight. Another official said the group has shown tenacity and that it was expected that it would present the biggest problem in Baghdad rather than in the south.

## Senate slashes tax cut

WASHINGTON — Senate Republicans appear to have little chance of restoring billions of dollars that lawmakers cut from President Bush's tax cut and redirected to war, veterans and deficit reduction.

A series of Senate votes left only \$350 billion where the president wanted \$726 billion over the next decade to inject new growth into the economy by accelerating scheduled income tax cuts and reducing dividend taxes.

The Senate voted 51-48 to reduce the size of the economic growth package as it weighed the cost of war and peace in Iraq.

"I think all of us realize that this is a long-term commitment that we're making to bring stability to that region of the world, and it's going to cost some money," said Sen. George Voinovich, R-Ohio.

Republicans have prepared a stack of new amendments that could increase the size of the tax cut, but Senate Budget Committee Chairman Don Nickles, R-Okla., said he will survey the landscape Wednesday before offering them.

"I'm not going to do that unless I think I'm going to win," he said.

## Remarks spurred ouster

DENVER — Brig. Gen. Sylvanus Taco Gilbert, one of four Air Force Academy officials ousted over the school's sexual assault scandal, came under scrutiny after telling a reporter one of the victims had put herself at risk.

Gilbert said there was no excuse for an attack on a female cadet, but added that her conduct had increased the risk of an assault.

"For example, if I walk down a dark alley with hundred-dollar bills hanging out of my pockets, it doesn't justify my being attacked or robbed, but I certainly increased the risk by doing what I did," he wrote in an e-mail response to questions from a Westword newspaper reporter.

Gilbert is a decorated pilot credited with restoring discipline at the academy.

The lanky, 6-foot-5 general graduated from the academy one year before it began admitting female cadets, then rose through the ranks to become commandant of 4,000 academy cadets in August 2001.

On Tuesday, Air Force leaders told senators in a closed-door briefing in Washington that Gilbert and three other top school officials will be replaced — by at least two women — because of the scandal, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton said.

Gilbert, whose responsibilities include commanding both cadets and support staff, could not be reached Tuesday. Academy officials declined comment until an Air Force report examining the scandal is released.

Sen. Wayne Allard, R-Colo., has said Gilbert was a "common thread" in reports he received from cadets who said they were reprimanded and ostracized after they told superiors they had been raped.

But what drew attention to him were his comments to the reporter.

Gilbert's name also surfaced in the investigation of a former enlisted man accused of sexually assaulting two women at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware. One of the victims said she received little support from base officials under Gilbert's command after being raped in her dorm room in March 2001 after a night of heavy drinking.

At the academy, Gilbert earned a reputation for being strict, compared with his predecessor.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John Jumper has even credited Gilbert with restoring discipline at the school.

Jumper and Air Force Secretary James Roche previously have said Gilbert and Lt. Gen. John Dallager, academy superintendent, would not lose their jobs because problems at the academy predated their leadership.

Investigators say they have turned up 56 reports of sexual assaults since 1993. Three investigative teams are looking into the allegations.

From wire reports

# Sgt. Maj. tosses retirement plan

BY SANDRA JONTZ

*Stars and Stripes*

ARLINGTON, Va. — Sgt. Maj. Alford McMichael has made an about-face. The top enlisted man of the Marine Corps isn't retiring after all.

This summer, McMichael is moving to Brussels, Belgium, and will again work for Gen. James Jones, commander of the U.S. European Command and NATO's Supreme Allied Commander — this time in the newly created job of senior enlisted adviser to NATO, creating noncommissioned officer training programs for allied nations without one, he told Stars and Stripes on Tuesday in an exclusive interview.

McMichael, 51, will leave his current job June 26. It has not been decided yet when he'll start his new job, billeted for 36 months, though the orders he received last week say his start date will be no later than July 31.

"Gen. Jones and Gen. [Michael] Hagee, our commandant, both agreed this would be a great thing for our country," McMichael said. "What we want to do is help create the NCO corps, especially in the new countries that are coming into the NATO league ... helping them create that form of training ... [and] helping them establish that form of NCO corps within their military."

Seven nations seeking to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization received invitations. They are Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

"I think the biggest challenge will be to tear down the walls that have been there longer than my presence, and to get people to see the value of what we're trying to bring to the table, of an NCO corps that it will not threaten the commissioned corps, it can only strengthen the organization."

McMichael, who has served under three commandants, would not say if

Jones handpicked him for the job or if anyone else had been considered. Jones is traveling and was not available for comment.

Jones has the right guy for the mission, Hagee said.

"When Gen. Jones explained his concept to help some of the new NATO countries in developing a professional NCO corps, I knew Sgt. Maj. McMichael's leadership, professionalism and experience made him the ideal choice," Hagee said. "He's a tremendous sergeant major, a role model and contributed much to our Corps. This billet will allow him to continue to serve the country he loves so much."

Hagee has not named a successor for sergeant major of the Corps. The list of candidates includes Sgt. Maj. John Mersino, command sergeant major of U.S. European Command; Sgt. Maj. Carlton Kent, sergeant major of U.S. Marine Corps Forces Europe; Sgt. Maj. John Estrada, sergeant major of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing; Sgt. Maj. William Kinney, sergeant major of 1st Marine Expeditionary Force.

The creation of this new NATO job falls in line with shifts Jones, the Corps' former commandant, has tossed out since assuming his new role in mid-January.

"I would say this is Gen. Jones' vision to help these countries understand the effectiveness of NCOs and senior NCOs in the armed forces of America and how they can benefit their staff, which I think would be a great undertaking to go and try to instill a new culture, not only in a country, but also in a military that is basically foreign to this process," McMichael said.

McMichael said he "got a call from Gen. Jones a few weeks ago" — then last week got his orders to officially segue to a new life in Europe. "It's a great opportunity to do something, if the word special is not too overblown, to do something special as well as different."

He speaks no language other than English, but plans to learn, he said. He'll likely tackle Danish first (since he studied it while stationed at the American Embassy in Denmark) followed by French, which is heavily spoken in Brussels. His wife, Rita, is excited about the new life they'll lead, he said.

McMichael said he isn't concerned that he has no predecessor from whom to learn. Being the first isn't new for the soft-spoken career Marine who enlisted Aug. 27, 1970.

McMichael was the first sergeant major to serve in Manpower and Reserve Affairs in 1996. Back then, "a lot of people didn't understand what the manpower sergeant major would do. Now they can't figure out how'd they do without."

"You needed someone to be involved with the everyday working parts and you needed someone to be the eyes and ears for the deputy commandant of Manpower and Reserve Affairs."

He said he wouldn't mind it if he's known as the education sergeant major.

"One of the most important things we do is to educate. After safety, education is the most important thing that got me going every day."

"My goals ... have been education of the military member, education for the spouse, the right education for the children and joint education for the service."

The last refers to learning the ins and outs of other services. "Our way is not the only way. We are not the only service. We're a great military country and we'll be fighting the fight with combined forces."

Rarely does THE sergeant major of the Corps continue his military career upon leaving the post.

This new job beckoned. "It was very difficult for me to say no."

So he didn't.

E-mail Sandra Jontz at: jontzs@stripes.osd.mil

## Animal kingdom helping troops on land, at sea

BY DENNIS O'BRIEN

*The Baltimore Sun*

Troops in Iraq are getting unprecedented help from the animal kingdom.

The Navy has a new detachment of sea lions in the Persian Gulf, ready to hunt and place underwater handcuffs on enemy divers.

Trained dolphins, who have seen service since Vietnam, are now patrolling gulf waters to help clear shipping lanes of mines.

On land, Marines are using pigeons as an early warning system to detect chemical weapons.

Military officials say the animals are a cost effective way to save lives and argue that their potential outweighs the minimal danger.

"We're not putting these animals at any risk," said Thomas LaPuzza, a spokesman at the Point Loma Submarine Base in San Diego, where 20 sea lions and 75 dolphins have been trained. "The mines they're detecting are a danger to ships, not to dolphins."

But the programs worry animal rights advocates.

Naomi Rose, a marine mammal scientist for the Humane Society of the United States, said she's as concerned as anyone about the war's human death toll, but that putting animals in harms way may be unethical.

"We don't like it. They're wild animals. They aren't volunteers — they were drafted," Rose said.

The Navy has spent four decades researching potential missions for aquatic animals, including a variety of whales. Its aquatic workhorse, though, is the bottle-nosed dolphin, which protected Navy divers in Vietnam in the 1970s and U.S. ships in Bahrain in the 1980s.

Dolphins make ideal students. Experts say they're as easy to train as intelligent dogs, can respond to dozens of signals, have excellent natural "sonar" and dive as deep as 1,500 feet.

Today, they're taught to find mines and mark them with floating buoys.

"They're very versatile animals," said David Schofield, a marine mammal expert at the National Aquarium. He emphasized that he neither endorsed nor opposed the Navy's program.

The Navy's California sea lions, which can dive as deep as 1,000 feet, are normally trained to recover unarmored practice mines after training exercises. But their directional hearing, excellent low light vision and ability to make repeated deep dives make them ideal for a more complex mission, officials say.

Now they're in a combat zone for the first time, in a demonstration project to see how well they can patrol for enemy frogmen and capture them.

The sea lion carries in its mouth a clamp attached to a long rope.

When it spots an enemy diver, the animal sneaks up, slaps the clamp on his leg, and then darts away while sailors on the surface haul the frogman up.

LaPuzza said the sea lions were sent over to the gulf only to demonstrate their capabilities. But he added, "They could decide to use them tomorrow." While the Navy takes pains to protect its dolphins and sea lions, the Marines' pigeons aren't so lucky. Their high respiratory rates make them more susceptible to chemical weapons than humans, so they're an expendable early warning system.

"These pigeons may well be like the canaries in the coal mines," said Dr. Charles Walcott, a Cornell University ornithologist.

"They're easy to care for and easy to transport, so they seem like a logical choice."

But the Marines aren't depending on pigeons alone. In fact, some military experts say the birds are not as sensitive as the high-tech sensors and other tools that all Marines and Army units carry.

The new equipment can detect gas clouds as far as three miles away, and all troops have protective suits that are lighter and more effective than those used in 1991. They also carry antidotes in pills and in hypodermic syringes they can inject if they are exposed to nerve gas or chemical agents.

## FIGURE SKATING

Evgeni Plushenko won the short program at the World Figure Skating Championships and Tim Goebel was second, setting up a showdown between the Russian and American in Thursday night's free skate.

Plushenko, the Olympic silver medalist and only former champion in the field, finished first with eight of the nine judges. Goebel, who won bronze at Salt Lake City, got the other first-place vote.

## BASEBALL

**SURPRISE, Ariz.** — Texas shortstop Alex Rodriguez went 2-for-8 with a homer and handled four fielding chances cleanly in a minor league game, his first game since being diagnosed with a herniated disc in his neck nearly two weeks ago.

Rodriguez batted once an inning and played seven innings in the field for Triple-A Oklahoma against Portland, San Diego's Triple-A team. Rodriguez said he felt fine after he was done, and would be ready for the season opener Sunday night at Anaheim.

**TAMPA, Fla.** — Jeff Weaver won the competition to be the New York Yankees' fifth starter.

The decision means Cuban right-hander Jose Contreras, who signed a \$32 million, four-year free agent contract during the offseason, will begin the regular season in the bullpen.

Weaver emerged early on as the front-runner. He is 2-1 with 1.35 ERA in five games. Acquired from Detroit last summer, he led the AL with three shutouts last year despite making few starts after the trade.

**KISSIMMEE, Fla.** — Longtime announcers Skip Caray and Pete Van Wieren won't be part of TBS' coverage of the Atlanta Braves at the start of the season as the cable network tries to lure more viewers.

## Smallpox shots, heart problems don't mix

*The Associated Press*

**WASHINGTON** — Health officials are recommending that people with heart disease not get vaccinated against smallpox, as authorities investigate a possible link between the vaccine and heart problems.

The vaccination has never been associated with heart problems before, but the warning and the investigation came Tuesday, after a Maryland woman died of a heart attack and six others became ill after being inoculated.

"I think we want to err on the side of safety," Dr. Julie Gerberding, director of the federal Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, said Tuesday.

Gerberding emphasized that officials do not know whether there is a connection and said the national vaccination program, off to a slow start, must move forward to prepare for the possibility of a bioterror attack with smallpox.

"The potential for terrorism has probably never been higher," she said.

Three of the seven people under investigation suffered heart attacks, including the Maryland woman who died, another woman who is now on life support and a third woman who was hospitalized and released. All three were health care or public health workers in their 50s.

Two other people developed angina, or chest pain.

All five of these patients had risk factors for heart disease before the vaccination, such as diabetes, obesity, hypertension or use of tobacco, Gerberding said.

The other two patients under investigation suffered from heart inflammation.

Gerberding said she does not expect to find a link between the heart trouble and the vaccine but wants further study before ruling it out.

## Sports in brief

Don Sutton and Joe Simpson, who have split television and radio duties with Caray and Van Wieren for the past several years, will be in the booth for 90 games on TBS.

Caray and Van Wieren, entering their 28th season with the Braves, will handle 36 games shown on Turner South, a regional cable network in only 6.5 million homes. By comparison, TBS can be seen in 87 million homes.

## TENNIS

**KEY BISCAYNE, Fla.** — Andre Agassi beat Mark Philippoussis 4-6, 6-3, 6-2 in the fourth round of the Nasdaq-100 Open.

Agassi converted only four of 14 break-point chances, but he remained patient until the Australian's game began to unravel.

Philippoussis finished with 28 winners but also 38 unforced errors.

Top-seeded defending champion Serena Williams and No. 3 Kim Clijsters easily advanced to a showdown in the women's semifinals.

## COLLEGE BASKETBALL

**ANN ARBOR, Mich.** — Sue Guevara resigned as women's basketball coach at Michigan after finishing last in the Big Ten.

Guevara went 123-82 in seven years, including trips to the NCAA tournament in 1998, 2000 and 2001. But this season's team went 13-16 overall and 3-13 in league play.

## FOOTBALL

**TAMPA, Fla.** — The infant son of Tampa Bay receiver Joe Jurevicius has died nearly 10 weeks after being born prematurely during the Buccaneers' run to the Super Bowl.

Michael William Jurevicius, born on Jan. 14, died Monday night at a hospital in St. Louis.

The receiver's wife, Meagan, gave birth to the couple's first child five days before the NFC championship game. Jurevicius missed three days of practice after the baby's birth, then flew to Philadelphia to help the Bucs defeat the Eagles 27-10.

Michael William died of critical complications resulting from undeveloped lungs.

**PHOENIX** — The NFL plans to use intact crews to officiate playoff games next season rather than all-star units — a move that comes after a postseason marked by officiating disputes.

The move, announced at the NFL meetings, is designed to ensure more cohesion by using officials who have worked together all year.

Until now, playoff crews had been made up of officials who rated the highest at their positions but hadn't necessarily worked together before.

## HOCKEY

Forty-five years after he broke the league's color barrier, Willie O'Ree was given the Lester Patrick Award for a lifetime of service to hockey in the United States.

On Jan. 18, 1958, O'Ree played his first game for the Bruins, a 3-0 victory over archrival Montreal. At the time, he didn't really think about his role in integrating the sport, nor did the next day's papers mention anything about his place in history.

By the time he was called back up to the Bruins in 1961, though, he was known as "the Jackie Robinson of hockey." In all, O'Ree played just 45 games in the NHL, scoring four goals.

## SKIING

**LAKE PLACID, N.Y.** — Julia Mancuso overcame a half-second deficit and a slip-up at the start of her second run to win the giant slalom, matching Bode Miller with three titles on the final day of the U.S. Alpine Championships.

Fifth after her first run, the 19-year-old Mancuso finished in 2 minutes, 34.52 seconds to add to her victories in the Super G and downhill.

Jessica Kelley was second in the giant slalom, 0.58 seconds behind. First-round leader Kristina Koznick tied for third with Jonna Mendes, 0.63 back. With temperatures in the 40s, conditions were slick and sloppy at Whiteface Mountain.

Miller dominated the men's events, winning the Super G, slalom and combined, and taking silver in the giant slalom. He was fourth in the downhill.

## SOCCER

**LONDON** — Arsenal beat Chelsea 3-1 and advanced to a semifinal against Sheffield United in The Football Association Cup.

Sylvain Wiltord and Bisan Lauren scored for Arsenal in the quarterfinal replay, and the Gunners got an own goal by John Terry, who accidentally kicked in a cross by Patrick Vieira. Terry also scored Chelsea's goal.

Watford plays Southampton in the other semifinal, with both games scheduled for April 13. The final is May 17 at Cardiff, Wales.

## AUTO RACING

**CHARLOTTE, N.C.** — NASCAR suspended Trucks Series crew chief John Monsam for two months and fined him \$1,500 for using an illegal spring at Mesa Marin Raceway.

NASCAR also fined Raymond Newman \$250 for using unapproved jacking bolts on Ken Weaver's truck team.

From The Associated Press

## Faces 'n' places

### Connie Chung, CNN part ways

CNN abruptly dropped one of its best known anchors, **Connie Chung**, who had been hired only last spring as the centerpiece of a star-driven prime-time lineup.

"Connie Chung Tonight" had been criticized in some circles for its emphasis on crime and personality stories but had drawn strong ratings in a nondescript time slot.

Her show was temporarily replaced by an **Aaron Brown**-anchored news program after the war's start last week and she had asked management for a time when it would come back. Instead, she was informed Tuesday that the show had been canceled, CNN spokeswoman **Christa Robinson** said.

Chung was asked to stay at CNN in another capacity and declined, Robinson said.

A major figure in broadcasting over the past 30 years, Chung was hired away from ABC News last year, where she primarily worked in newsmagazines and landed a high-profile interview with **Gary Condit**.

CNN built a new studio for her in midtown **Manhattan** and the program launched on June 24.

She envisioned her show opening each night with a detailed look at one of the day's top stories, featuring newsmaker interviews and highlighting emerging issues.

It evolved into a program concentrating heavily on crime stories, and this master of the taped interview occasionally seemed awkward in a live format. It didn't help when CNN founder **Ted Turner**, in an interview this winter, described her show as "just awful."

She also apparently became caught in the crosswinds of change at CNN. Turner Broadcasting chief **Jamie Kellner** wanted to attract viewers with well-known names, but he and CNN Chairman **Walter Isaacson**, who hired her, have since resigned.

Isaacson's replacement, **Jim Walton**, has sought a less flashy, more serious approach to the news and recently canceled the long-running afternoon talk show, "Talkback Live."

### Nolte: Still a 'criminal' at heart

**Nick Nolte**, who made headlines last year when he was arrested for driving under the influence of drugs, says he's now clean and sober but still finds himself drawn to "criminal" characters.

"I'm not a fan of real life," Nolte said in **New York**, adding that he has publicly "fabricated" many stories from his private life. "Real life's got some strange kind of rules."

Nolte, 62, who has appeared in nearly 50 films and received two Oscar nominations, is trying to mend his career with a starring role in a remake of the 1955 French film "The Good Thief."

Nolte says he gravitates toward characters who reflect his anti-establishment persona.

"Socialization is difficult for me," the actor said. "I'm not comfortable with a lot of people I don't know, so I'll pick out the criminal and go talk to the suffering one."

Nolte said he has long struggled with drugs and alcohol, an addiction made public in **Malibu, Calif.**, in September when he pleaded no contest to charges of driving under the influence of a date rape drug.

"I always said I had substance-abuse problems," Nolte said. "You deal with it. You keep it under control. Sometimes you don't. Withdrawal is tough, so you go to a hospital. ... You learn to wash your own underwear. After 30 days, you're clean. Now the trick is not to relapse."

### Julie Andrews still a star for all ages

**Julie Andrews** is still drawing audiences more than 40 years after gaining superstar status on **Broadway** and in film.

Andrews, 67, remains busy with movie roles and writing her autobiography and children's books.

"I find it very stimulating," she said. "I'm delighted that there is still a lot of interest."

Andrews appeared on the Oscars telecast Sunday from the Kodak Theatre in a reunion of Academy Award winners, in recognition of her best actress Oscar for 1964's "Mary Poppins."

"I have the older people who remember 'The Sound of Music' and 'Mary Poppins,' and children because of 'The Princess Diaries,'" Andrews said.

Surgery five years ago to remove noncancerous nodes on her vocal chords damaged her throat, silencing her famous four-octave soprano singing voice.

### Rapper Fabolous faces weapons charges

Gangster rapper **Fabolous** has run afoul of the law — again.

The performer was awaiting arraignment on a weapons charge Monday in **New York** after officers pulled over the Ford van he was riding in and allegedly found a 9 mm pistol inside, police said.

Four other people in the van also face criminal weapons possession charges, said **Sgt. Michael Wysokowski**, a police spokesman.

A Webster Hall security guard called police after seeing a member of Fabolous' entourage stick a gun in the van before passing through the downtown club's metal detector, police said.

The rapper's attorney, **Albert Ebanks**, said Monday that the pistol belonged to a bodyguard hired by Fabolous' record company to protect him as he performed at the venue off Union Square on Sunday night.

Fabolous, whose real name is **John Jackson**, was arrested twice in two days in January, once for allegedly driving with a suspended license and the second time after police said they discovered guns in a car he was riding in.

From The Associated Press

**Lakers 108, Hawks 91**

ATLANTA — Kobe Bryant scored 15 of his 28 points in the fourth quarter as the Los Angeles Lakers pulled away from Atlanta for a 108-91 victory Tuesday.

Shaquille O'Neal scored 31 points in 32 minutes and was able to rest the entire fourth quarter. The Lakers won for the third time in their past eight games away from Los Angeles.

Bryant turned the sellout crowd of 19,280 in his favor, prompting fans to chant "MVP! MVP!" as he hit four consecutive three-pointers to turn an 11-point lead into a 99-80 margin with 4:59 remaining. He added a team-high 10 rebounds and six assists.

Glenn Robinson scored 22 points to lead the Hawks. Jason Terry handed out 16 assists.

**Timberwolves 108, Heat 91**

MINNEAPOLIS — Kevin Garnett and Wally Szczerbiak scored 26 points each as Minnesota beat Miami for its fourth consecutive victory and moved 20 games over .500.

Szczerbiak made 10 of 13 shots and Garnett went 10-for-15 for the Timberwolves (46-26), who hadn't been this far over .500 since they were 40-20 on March 5 last season.

Garnett added eight rebounds and eight assists, ending his franchise-best streak of 19 consecutive double-doubles. He leads the NBA with 60 double-doubles this season.

Marc Jackson had 10 points and 10 re-

**Red Wings 4, Wild 0**

DETROIT — Curtis Joseph earned his 40th career shutout, and Igor Larionov had a goal and two assists as Detroit beat Minnesota 4-0 Tuesday.

Joseph, who has four shutouts this season, was forced to make only 18 saves. Sergei Fedorov, Henrik Zetterberg and Tomas Holmstrom scored the other goals, and Mathieu Schneider had two assists.

Minnesota was held without a shot for over 10 minutes to begin the game before Marian Gaborik was stopped on a breakaway by Joseph.

**Hurricanes 3, Maple Leafs 3**

RALEIGH, N.C. — Jeff O'Neill scored with 33 seconds remaining in regulation as Carolina avoided a season sweep against Toronto.

O'Neill scored his team-leading 30th of the season 27 seconds after Carolina pulled Kevin Weekes for an extra skater. O'Neill has at least 30 goals three successive seasons.

The Maple Leafs, who had beaten Carolina three straight times this season, took a 3-2 lead with 11:04 left when Owen Nolan scored his seventh goal in nine games since being traded from San Jose on March 5.

Weekes was able to salvage the point for Carolina when he stopped Alexander Mogilny on a breakaway in the final 14.3 seconds of overtime.

**Avalanche 2, Senators 2**

OTTAWA — Alex Tanguay scored with 10.2 seconds remaining in regulation to lift Colorado to a tie with Ottawa.

Tanguay took a pass from Peter Forsberg in front of the Senators goal and beat Patrick Lalime after Vaclav Varada's power-play tally gave Ottawa the lead with less than a minute remaining.

Rob Blake also scored for Colorado, which has just one loss in four games and prevented the Senators from recording their franchise-record 49th victory.

Blake took a late roughing penalty that allowed Ottawa to score with 53.6 seconds left in regulation.

Martin Havlat had the Senators' other goal.

**NBA**

bounds for Minnesota, fighting Portland for the fourth spot and home-court advantage in the first round of the playoffs.

Caron Butler scored 21 points and Anthony Carter had a career-high 15 assists for Miami, which has lost 10 of its past 12.

**Cavaliers 124, Warriors 103**

CLEVELAND — Ricky Davis scored 28 points and Zydrunas Ilgauskas added 23 as Cleveland defeated Golden State to win consecutive games for the first time this season.

Carlos Boozer had 19 points and 14 rebounds for the Cavaliers. Ilgauskas grabbed 10 rebounds, while Davis added 11 assists.

Antawn Jamison led Golden State with 23 points, and Gilbert Arenas had 21. The Warriors began a five-game road trip that includes games against Boston, Philadelphia and New Jersey.

**Spurs 107, Bucks 94**

SAN ANTONIO — Tim Duncan scored 31 points, and Speedy Claxton had 12 points, 11 assists and nine rebounds to lead San Antonio over Milwaukee.

Spurs center David Robinson, who plans to retire after this season, was honored at halftime and after the game for his 13 years with the team. He scored 10 points.

Claxton came off the bench to replace starting point guard Tony Parker, who left with a sprained right wrist at the end of the first quarter. The third-year guard finished with career highs in assists and rebounds.

Malik Rose added 18 points for the Spurs, who have already clinched a playoff spot. Sam Cassell led the Bucks with 19 points.

**Wizards 95, Trail Blazers 91**

PORTLAND, Ore. — Michael Jordan scored 25 points and former teammate Scottie Pippen watched in street clothes from the Portland bench, as Washington held off a late rally.

The final regular-season meeting between Jordan and Pippen, who played together on the Chicago Bulls teams that won six NBA championships in the 1990s, was derailed when Pippen went on the injured list after arthroscopic surgery on his left knee.

Jordan has said he plans to retire after this season. The only way they would face each other again is if the Wizards and Trail Blazers meet in the NBA Finals.

The Wizards, fighting with Milwaukee for the final playoff spot in the East, snapped a three-game losing streak. The Blazers have lost four of six.

Jordan added seven assists. Jerry Stackhouse scored 24 points, and Tyrone Lue had 21. Bonzi Wells led the Blazers with 20 points and 10 rebounds.

From The Associated Press

**NHL**

Lalime finished with 18 saves. Patrick Roy stopped 37 shots for the Avalanche.

**Capitals 4, Canadiens 3 (OT)**

MONTREAL — Josef Boumedienne scored 3:09 into overtime to lift Washington over Montreal.

The Capitals tied it three times in the third period.

Jaromir Jagr, Washington's leading scorer with 74 points, returned after missing six games with a wrist injury and assisted on the winning goal.

Sergei Berezin got Washington even with 3:08 remaining in regulation after Robert Lang and Dainius Zubrus scored tying goals earlier in the period.

The Capitals, sixth in the East with 85 points, are three points behind Tampa Bay for the Southeast Division lead.

Chad Kilger, Richard Zednik and Donald Audette scored for Montreal, which moved closer to missing the playoffs for the fourth time in five seasons.

**Flyers 1, Predators 1**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Mark Eaton scored his second goal of the season with 1:24 remaining in regulation as Nashville salvaged a tie with Philadelphia but was still eliminated from playoff contention.

Nashville was just three points out of the eighth spot in the Western Conference on March 1, but the Predators have not won since March 7 in a winless skid that reached nine games Tuesday (0-5-3-1).

The Flyers, who already have a playoff spot clinched and are trying to catch Atlantic Division-leading New Jersey, outshot Nashville 43-21. Philadelphia trails New Jersey by three points.

Philadelphia took a 1-0 lead when Michal Handzus scored at 11:05 of the third.

**Islanders 9, Blackhawks 2**

CHICAGO — Alexei Yashin scored four goals, and five New York teammates also scored as the Islanders routed Chicago.

**Scores/standings****NBA****EASTERN CONFERENCE****Atlantic Division**

	W	L	Pct	GB
New Jersey	42	28	.600	—
Philadelphia	41	28	.594	1/2
Boston	38	33	.535	4 1/2
Orlando	37	34	.521	5 1/2
Washington	33	37	.471	9
New York	32	39	.451	10 1/2
Miami	22	49	.310	20 1/2

**Central Division**

	W	L	Pct	GB
Detroit	44	25	.638	—
Indiana	41	29	.586	3 1/2
New Orleans	40	31	.563	5
Milwaukee	34	37	.479	11
Atlanta	29	43	.403	16 1/2
Chicago	25	46	.352	20
Toronto	21	48	.304	23
Cleveland	14	56	.200	30 1/2

**WESTERN CONFERENCE****Midwest Division**

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Dallas	53	17	.757	—
x-San Antonio	50	20	.714	3
Minnesota	46	26	.639	8
Utah	41	29	.586	12
Houston	37	33	.529	16
Memphis	26	44	.371	27
Denver	15	56	.211	38 1/2

**Pacific Division**

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Sacramento	50	21	.704	—
Portland	44	26	.629	5 1/2
L.A. Lakers	40	30	.571	9 1/2
Phoenix	36	34	.514	13 1/2
Golden State	34	37	.479	16
Seattle	33	36	.478	16
L.A. Clippers	22	48	.314	27 1/2

**Tuesday's games**

Cleveland 124, Golden State 103  
L.A. Lakers 108, Atlanta 91  
Minnesota 108, Miami 91  
San Antonio 107, Milwaukee 94  
Washington 95, Portland 91

**NHL****EASTERN CONFERENCE****Atlantic Division**

	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF	GA
x-New Jersey	44	20	6	5	99	200	156
x-Philadelphia	40	20	12	4	96	186	160
N.Y. Islanders	34	30	10	2	80	214	209
N.Y. Rangers	31	33	9	3	74	196	214
Pittsburgh	25	41	6	5	61	179	238

**Northeast Division**

	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF	GA
y-Ottawa	48	20	8	1	105	247	174
x-Toronto	40	27	7	3	90	221	197
Boston	35	29	8	4	82	229	221
Montreal	28	32	8	9	73	194	221
Buffalo	23	35	9	8	63	170	200

**Southeast Division**

	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF	GA
x-Tampa Bay	35	23	13	5	88	209	194
Washington	36	28	8	5	85	209	206
Florida	23	32	12	9	67	167	222
Atlanta	26	38	6	5	63	201	269
Carolina	22	37	11	6	61	165	219

**WESTERN CONFERENCE****Central Division**

	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF	GA
x-Detroit	45	19	9	3	102	247	187
x-St. Louis	39	21	9	6	93	235	197
Nashville	27	30	13	6	73	179	191
Chicago	27	33	11	5	70	184	208
Columbus	27	39	7	3	64	196	242

**Northwest Division**

	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF	GA
x-Vancouver	43	21	12	1	99	250	198
x-Colorado	37	18	13	8	95	227	182
x-Minnesota	39	26	10	1	89	186	166
Edmonton	34	25	8	9	85	210	211
Calgary	26	34	12	4	68	172	214

**Pacific Division**

	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF	GA
y-Dallas	42	17	15	3	102	233	163
x-Anaheim	38	26	9	5	90	194	185
Phoenix	30	32	9	4	73	188	204
Los Angeles	30	35	6	5	71	189	204
San Jose	27	35	6	8	68	199	224

Two points for a win, one point for a tie and overtime loss.

x-clinched playoff spot  
y-clinched division

**Tuesday's games**

Colorado 2, Ottawa 2, tie  
Toronto 3, Carolina 3, tie  
Detroit 4, Minnesota 0  
Washington 4, Montreal 3, OT  
Philadelphia 1, Nashville 1, tie  
N.Y. Islanders 9, Chicago 2  
Dallas 4, Vancouver 3, OT  
Columbus 2, Los Angeles 1, OT

From The Associated Press

From The Associated Press